

Public Safety and Security Committee

Public Hearing Testimony

February 10, 2009

**H.B. 6287 (RAISED) AN ACT AUTHORIZING CASH PRIZES FOR "BLOWER BALL"
GAMES.**

**H.B. 6323 (RAISED) AN ACT PERMITTING "FIFTY-FIFTY" COUPON GAMES AT
CERTAIN ORGANIZATION FUNCTIONS AND ATHLETIC EVENTS.**

Testimony submitted by:
Division of Special Revenue

Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan, members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Paul Young, and I am the Executive Director of the Division of Special Revenue. I am here to address two Division proposals on your agenda. We appreciate the Committee's consideration in raising them and scheduling them for this hearing. Each proposal relates to our charitable gaming program.

The first proposal is Raised Bill No. 6287 titled 'An Act Authorizing Cash Prizes For "Blower Ball" Games'. It would amend the Bazaar and Raffle Law (Sections 7-170 to 7-186, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes) so as to authorize any nonprofit organization or group conducting a bazaar to award cash prizes which shall not exceed fifty dollars each in connection with the playing of a "blower ball" game.

This proposal would authorize a cash prize replacement for the popular "money-wheel" game. The authority to conduct the "money-wheel" game was lost with the repeal of the Las Vegas night law in January 2003, as a "money-wheel" game is a casino game. This proposal would replace the use of a "money-wheel" with a "blower ball" machine (not a casino game or equipment item). A "blower ball" cash game would be played in the same manner as a "money-wheel" game, with payment odds of one-to-one up to three-to-one. However, instead of a winner being determined by the spin of a marked wheel, the winner would be determined by the drawing of a colored or numbered ball. Nonprofit organizations, such as churches, volunteer fire departments, and veteran organizations, made use of bazaar permits and "money-wheel" game activity to realize thousands of dollars in income for their worthy purposes. That was all lost

with the 2003 repeal. This proposal would authorize a cash prize activity which may replace the "money-wheel" in popularity and become very helpful to our nonprofit bazaar permittees.

The second proposal is Raised Bill No.6323 titled '**An Act Permitting "Fifty-Fifty" Coupon Games At Certain Organization Functions And Athletic Events.**' It would amend the Bazaar and Raffle Law (Section 7-185a of the general statutes) so as to authorize a "fifty-fifty" special event permit for use in extending "fifty-fifty" coupon game fundraising, conducted by qualified nonprofit organizations. As proposed, a "fifty-fifty" special event permit would be good for one year and would cost fifty dollars, with twenty-five dollars retained by the permit issuing municipality and twenty-five dollars remitted to the State.

A "fifty-fifty" coupon game can be conducted, legally, today, under a bazaar permit. However, the requisite permit would only be effective for each day of a permitted event (up to ten consecutive days), and an organization may only obtain two bazaar permits a year. Many organizations, for example, would want to conduct "fifty-fifty" activity at high school football games or other events throughout a season, in order to maximize their fundraising potential. The new type of permit authorized through this legislation would enable a qualifying organization to do that.

That concludes the testimony. I would be pleased to respond to questions, if any.